

GAMES

FAQ

Q I'm trying to get some of my old DOS games to work in Windows XP, but I'm not having much luck. I've tried compatibility mode, but this doesn't work. What can I do?

A Windows XP doesn't have a true DOS mode. When you run a command prompt, you get a kind of DOS-emulation mode, which not all games like. However, this doesn't mean that you're completely stuck.

Windows XP has various settings that you can configure to get your old games running. See www.dosgames.com/xphints.php for a list of these settings. If your game still doesn't work then download DOSBox, which will fool your games into thinking that they are running on a DOS PC. DOSBox is available for free from <http://dosbox.sourceforge.net>.

David Ludlow

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EA

The Sims 2: Open for Business

★★★★★

£15 inc VAT



Open for Business, an expansion pack for the The Sims 2, allows you to follow your Sims to work and control their business lives as well as their personal lives. Starting the game gives you the opportunity to create a new shopping district where you can build dedicated shops or buy existing ones.

If you don't want to do this, you can start small and operate a home business. To start, all you need is a cash register. Part of the The Sims' charm is its flexibility, which extends to Open for Business. You can create and run any type of business you like, as every object in the catalogue can be put up for sale.

In addition, you can buy a ticket machine and charge people for the amount of time they spend in your shop. For example, you could set up a load of games consoles and charge people for using them.

The real fun comes from buying your own shop and going to work there. There's a selection of shops that you can buy for a wide range of prices. However, as you scroll through the list there's no obvious way of seeing which you can afford. A simple option that greys out those you can't afford would have been better.

To operate the business, you need to get the Sim that owns it to go to the shop. If they have a car, they can drive; otherwise, a taxi will suffice. You have to select the destination from a list; it's a shame there are no short cuts for properties that you own.

Once in your shop, you can hire and fire staff, and give them uniforms. Part of the fun of the game comes from training your

staff. There's a range of skills they can learn, including salesmanship. The better they get at each skill, the better your business will perform.

You must carefully manage employees to keep your business running smoothly. Assign your staff jobs such as restocking the shop, operating the till or working the shop floor. Don't forget your development, though. You need to work hard to build up a decent sales patter so you can boost purchases and increase your profits.

If you'd like to micromanage your business, you can set the price for individual items in your store. There's also a global option to set pricing from ridiculously cheap to extortionately expensive. It's important to get the right balance so you improve customer loyalty.

As well as selling predefined objects, you can buy workstations to build products.

These are mostly toy machines, which is fine if you're running a toy shop, but hardly fitting if you run a clothes shop. A wider selection of stations would have been nice.

Still, the minor flaws in this expansion pack aren't enough to ruin a flexible and extremely fun way of taking your Sims through their professional lives.

David Ludlow



▲ Control your Sims' working lives with Open for Business

SUMMARY

- ✓ Flexible range of businesses
- ✓ Great fun
- ✗ Needs wider selection of workstations

EXPANSION PACK Requires The Sims 2, Windows 98 or later, 1GHz processor, 256MB RAM, 1.5GB disk space

PRODUCT CODE MXE08004985IS

SUPPLIER www.cd-wow.com

DETAILS www.thesims.com

Top 5 games

1. Civilization IV

£18 inc VAT ★★★★★



Play as God as you build a futuristic city from nothing. Plenty of warfare mixed with town planning and building means there's lots on offer for all types of game players.

SUPPLIER www.play.com DETAILS www.2kgames.com FULL REVIEW January 2006



2. Black & White 2

£25 inc VAT ★★★★★



Nurture or torture your followers by playing a loving god or a feared deity. Loving visuals and paths of peace or violence make this game a sure-fire winner.

SUPPLIER www.cd-wow.com DETAILS www.eagames.com FULL REVIEW February 2006



3. Call of Duty 2

£18 inc VAT ★★★★★



Outstanding WWII game where you play as a British, American or Russian soldier fighting the Nazis. Excellent graphics, frenetic action and often truly frightening.

SUPPLIER www.cd-wow.com DETAILS www.callofduty.com FULL REVIEW March 2006



4. Gametrak: Real World Golf

£35 inc VAT ★★★★★



Strap on the gloves provided, and Real World Golf tracks your golf swing. It feels surprisingly realistic and sure beats playing with a joypad. This is one for all golf fans.

SUPPLIER www.amazon.co.uk DETAILS www.realworldgolf.com FULL REVIEW April 2006



5. Tycoon City: New York

£18 inc VAT ★★★★★



Build a property empire in the Big Apple. There are plenty of challenges to spice up gameplay, and the desire to make your businesses competitive means hours of fun.

SUPPLIER www.cd-wow.com DETAILS www.uk.atari.com FULL REVIEW April 2006





▲ More enjoyable than *Days of Thunder*, but is *Crashday* a realistic driving experience?

ATARI Crashday

★★★★

£16 inc VAT

Driving one extremely fast and expensive sports car into another extremely fast and expensive sports car may sound like lots of fun, but is it really a game? Atari certainly seems to think so, and so it has created the demolition-based *Crashday*.

While it sounds brilliant, we have our doubts. First, the actual driving is some of the most unrealistic we've ever seen in a game. While you can't expect a game about smashing cars at high speed to be overly lifelike, at times it feels more like you're driving a hovercraft than a performance vehicle. And it's not just one car that feels like this. No matter which model you choose, they all seem to handle in exactly the same way.

This is particularly irritating on the levels where you have to race round a track, as it makes it nigh on impossible to corner properly. The problem is compounded by the game's insistence that you have to pass through a series of checkpoints, which it places right on corners. We spent a large portion of our time reversing back around the track to make a checkpoint we'd skidded straight past.

The stunt levels are more fun, where you are awarded points for performing outlandish stunts in your car. The levels are varied and there are some great ramps, such as loop-the-loops. However, it mostly boils down to jumps, which can become a little tedious.

A big part of the game are the destruction levels, where you take your machine gun and missile-armed car and blow up the opposition. Again, this is brilliant fun for a while, but it's too easy to kill and be killed, so matches soon become repetitive.

The detailed and slick-looking graphics make up for a lot, but they can't save this game from feeling like the entertaining bonus section of a proper racing game, and you will soon be wishing that you could get back to some proper high-speed driving.

David Ludlow

SUMMARY

- ✓ Slick graphics
- ✗ Repetitive action
- ✗ Poor handling on all cars

DRIVING GAME Requires Windows 2000/XP, 1.5GHz processor, 512MB RAM, 1.5 disk space
PRODUCT CODE ATA0229UK SUPPLIER www.dvd.co.uk
DETAILS www.atari.co.uk



▲ Rock around the clock: younger players may take time to fathom *Rescue from Rock Castle*

GSP Rescue From Rock Castle

★★★★★

£10 inc VAT

Rescue From Rock Castle stars everyone's childhood favourite, Playmobil. Lovingly recreated in 3D, the Playmobil characters look just as we remembered them, right down to the permanent case of helmet hair.

Aimed at children between the ages of six and 10, *Rescue From Rock Castle* follows the story of Alex as he trains to be a knight so he can rescue Laura from the clutches of an evil sorcerer. Along the way, you'll meet lots of new characters who will either help or hinder you, and face a range of puzzles.

The diversity of puzzles is good, ranging from making suits of armour (matching shapes and colours) to jousting. The level of difficulty is just about perfect for the intended audience, but it can be frustrating at times. For example, it's not obvious which way round the armour pieces go, so it will probably take younger children some time to work it out.

Once you've completed a puzzle, it can be difficult to work out what to do next. Invariably, you will end up standing in an area with no instructions on where to go. It can take a few frustrating clicks to select the right doorway or window to move on to.

The sections between puzzles often involve searching for items, such as old coins. This usually results in moving the mouse round the screen and clicking on items until the task is complete. It's fine the first time you have to do this, but two or three times in, it's repetitive, and it left us longing for the next puzzle.

As well as progressing through the game, there are some hidden extras such as collecting and printing coloured shields that you find along the way. Kids will love being able to take something physical away from the game.

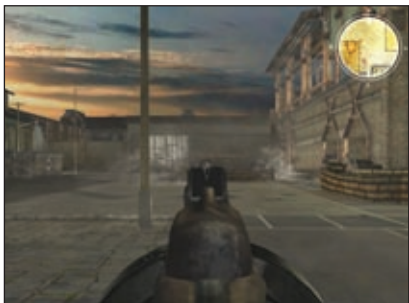
Rescue From Rock Castle is entertaining, well put together and varied enough to keep a kid's interest and, as such, it is excellent value.

David Ludlow

SUMMARY

- ✓ Brilliant fun
- ✓ Lots of diversity
- ✗ Can get repetitive

ADVENTURE GAME Requires Windows 98 or later, 450MHz processor, 64MB RAM, 600MB disk space
PRODUCT CODE PRC-DVD SUPPLIER GSP 01480
496666 DETAILS www.gsp.cc



▲ *ÜberSoldier* is a compelling first-person shooter, but the weapons are nothing special

CDV ÜberSoldier

★★★★

£17 inc VAT

In *ÜberSoldier*, a Nazi zombie soldier turns against the Third Reich using his superhuman powers. While this premise sounds ridiculous, *ÜberSoldier* manages to rise above its B-movie roots. Despite being produced for probably less money than *Half-Life 2*'s packaging cost, it's a surprisingly slick affair.

We were expecting out-of-date graphics and poor character animation, but we're happy to say we were wrong. It's not as accomplished as *F.E.A.R.* or *Call of Duty 2*, but it still looks fresh. It has neat lighting effects, blurred motion when you get shot, excellent character movement and sharp textures. Only the occasional model, such as the large eagle statues, look poor.

ÜberSoldier falls down a little with its gameplay, which isn't quite as accomplished as its competition. The weapons, while varied, never feel as though they're going to do much damage. They're also incredibly difficult to aim properly; this might be realistic, but it doesn't help you get into the game.

A nice touch is the time shield that all good zombie ex-Nazis can generate to deflect bullets in a *Matrix*-style way. The effect looks great, and strategic use of it can help you through the game's most difficult stages. Unfortunately we ran into the occasional bug, such as on the first level. The mission objective told us we had to help Maggie escape the compound. Although we'd killed every Nazi in sight, she refused to move forwards, even with a grenade behind her. Restarting the level fixed the problem, but it was quite frustrating.

The poor voice acting, where all the Nazis sound as though they come from the Home Counties or *South Park*, doesn't help. Having the correct accents would help the storyline and make *ÜberSoldier* more engaging.

This is still an entertaining distraction and there's a lot of fun to be had. If you've made your way through every other FPS, *ÜberSoldier* is a cheap way to keep yourself occupied.

David Ludlow

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good fun
- ✗ Awful acting and cut scenes
- ✗ Occasional bugs

FPS Requires Windows 2000/XP, 2.4GHz processor, 512MB RAM, 2.5GB disk space
PRODUCT CODE B000EHKRJI
SUPPLIER www.amazon.co.uk
DETAILS www.cdv.de